

July 22, 2018

## Sermon

“Come away to a deserted place, all by yourselves, and rest for a while,” Wow, doesn’t that sound enticing? An opportunity to go far from other people, far from the daily hustle and bustle, far from all responsibilities. And Rest. Yes, all of that sounds pretty ideal to me, especially at this moment as I try to balance last minute Vacation Bible School preparations, family events, and preparing to move across the country- I am in need of a break.

And I imagine it seemed like a nice offer to the disciples too- here they are spending their lives following Jesus, traveling on endless road trips and constantly working. Perhaps, Jesus’ offer even seemed like a reward or token of appreciation to the disciples for their devotion and commitment to Jesus. Regardless, I expect they were excited and looked forward to a chance to just rest and be alone for a while.

Now, think of the incredible surprise they experienced when they got to their supposed “deserted place” and it was filled with people waiting to see Jesus and his followers. Their work had found them. I don’t know about you, but this reminds me of my lazy days- the days when I stay at home in my pajamas long after breakfast and inevitably realize I need something from the grocery store. I don’t elect to change because after all I’m just running in for that one item, I don’t care what I look like- I won’t see anyone I know... and of course that’s the day I run into everyone I know from the church, from the school, from the community.

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Immediately I am snapped back into the reality that the rest of the world isn't aware of my lazy day and I quickly try to find the nearest escape and retreat back to my home. The disciples, however aren't as lucky as I, instead of retreating when they are recognized, Jesus sees this as another opportunity to serve and begins to teach the crowd. The disciples "rest day" they were promised has turned into yet another work day just in a different venue.

That would have to have been disappointing, I mean their plans were ruined. No more deserted place, no more rest. I wonder if they were angry with Jesus? I mean couldn't he have just said "I'm sorry, we're on vacation right now, we'll get back with you and the miracles on another day?" Surely he could have done something to protect the plans that were made. But no, he saw the need to teach the crowds and at the same time perhaps teach his disciples something as well.

Think of all the times you have made plans, and something has come up and the plans do not turn out like you had hoped. Or maybe you did everything you were supposed to do, and someone else dropped the ball. I am pretty Type A when it comes to planning my life, I like to have everything mapped out, it keeps me calm and focused. And when I mapped out my ten-year plan in college, I was to get my Bachelor's in English, immediately begin law school, finish that, get a job, work my way to partner and then start a family. There was nothing on it about returning home, Children or Youth ministry, coaching cheerleading, or attending seminary. No, none of that made the cut or was even on my radar.

So, you may be wondering, how then did I end up here? Yes, there are a lot of things: some upset plans, some disappointments-all that led me here; but the simplest, most honest answer, is God. You see,

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back in my senior year of college, I abandoned my own plan, well not fully abandoned it, just modified it a bit. I didn't recognize at the time, and really only came to see it in the past few years, but I had lived my life up until that point thinking that I could plan for everything. There's a big problem when you think you have that much control, at some point you're going to realize you don't. I reached that point in college and I am forever grateful it was then and not anytime later, because the minute I stopped trying to be in control- I made room for the one who IS in control.

I think it's our human nature to desire to be in control of all situations; it's how we're programmed. Maybe we even think that because we are given this responsibility called our life, with it we have full control over things. And despite our innate drive to get things done or make things happen, we find we only have control over a few things. We may think we are flawed, that we have failed somewhere on our planning or messed something up, when truthfully, we are simply forgetful. We have forgotten that our creator designed us, so we would not be in control of all. We have forgotten, we are still only human.

I heard the phrase "Let Go, and Let God," back in high school, I thought of it as just a trendy expression, it didn't really mean anything to me until recently, until I actually Let Go. It was hard, intimidating and even frightening giving up the power I thought I had or needed. The reward, however, has been far greater than I could ever have planned or even imagined. The stress has been lifted, the anxiety reduced and the comfort of knowing there is room for God to work in my life is endless.

What continues to bewilder me though, is that even though I am aware now more than ever that God is in control, I often still forget.

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I continually find myself trying to figure everything out and consequently figuring nothing out. Ultimately, I am thankful for these times, because even though it may be the harder way I am reminded again that I am not in control.

Now I think again of the disciples in our Gospel lesson, were they too in the need of a reminder of who was in control? Think back to the beginning, as it was Jesus who first suggested a day of rest, he knew the disciples needed time to re-energize themselves before continuing on their next journey. He threw the first dent in their plans, and He reminded them who was boss. And then just when they thought had it figured out again, He showed them another time who had the power. He reminded them with these actions, that they needed to let go, and when they did they were rewarded with witnessing Jesus with the crowds, healing the sick, feeding the hungry and just being a part of Jesus' movement. All of which was in the end, was probably far greater and more rejuvenating than any rest on a deserted place and maybe even meant more because it wasn't on the schedule.

So, as we continue with our day-to-day routine, let us also remember whose responsibility it is to be in control... Let us remember often to Let Go and Let God for the reward may be far greater than we could ever imagine or plan.

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